STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES #22

"PLANTING ROOTS"

by

Micah Ian Wright

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Wildstorm Comics
888 Prospect Avenue
La Jolla, CA 92037

StormWatch: Team Achilles
#22 “Planting Roots”
Written by Micah Ian Wright
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PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

3/4 page shot. The Venice Square where we ended last issue. The dead Merovingian lies on the ground, exploded. Behind him is the chest-burst-heart-torn corpse of Juan José, twitching, electricity pumping out of his corpse. Nearby, Flint lies on the ground, face down, not moving, her costume charred & burnt. The Merovingian’s dead bodyguards riddle the ground, as do several wounded tourists.

Standing there, looking tough is The Hallibastard.

SANTINI
Eye in the Sky, abort, abort, abort. Tefibi, I need teleport, NOW!

TEFIBI (OVER RADIO)
I’m on it, Big Brain.

HALLIBASTARD
Hey...

PANEL TWO

In the belltower. Pinckney & Golovin. Golovin on her knee, wrapping a condom around the barrel of her gun. Pinckney standing up, facing a teleport circle, holding his rifle.

TEFIBI (OVER RADIO)
Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Tefibi Airlines. Please step forward into the blue circle and expect a slight plunge into freezing cold water.

PINCKNEY
What’s he on about?

GOLOVIN
No telling. Just go.

PINCKNEY
Nah-ah. Got a funny feeling about this one.

PAGE 2

PANEL ONE

Pinckney sticks his head through the circle, his body still in the belltower.

PINCKNEY
Bloody Hell, I'm not jumping that!

PANEL TWO

Golovin roughly shoves Pinckney into the circle.

GOLOVIN
Enough Delay.

PINCKNEY
What're you-

PANEL THREE

Large. Project Entry Universe (where everything is all fucked up). The sky is red, the city is nowhere to be seen. The St. Marks belltower is barely sticking up out of the water... Venice has SUNKEN into the sea. 60 feet up, Pinckney falls out of an open blue Project Entry circle, tumbling down towards the water below.

CAPTION
Project Entry Universe.

PINCKNEY
Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

PAGE 3

PANEL ONE

Golovin steps through the hole, arms crossed over her chest, rifle held out in front of her vertically.

NO DIALOG

PANEL TWO

She falls downwards, ankles crossed, legs straight, body straight, rifle upright and at arm’s length, eyes closed, lips pursed.

NO DIALOG

PANEL THREE

She hits the water, cutting in like a knife. Nearby, Pinckney is swimming for a teleport hole which is floating just above the water.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

Pinckney hauls himself up into the floating hole. Golovin surfaces, her hair in her eyes.

GOLOVIN
YEBANY VROT! I dropped my rifle!

PINCKNEY
Yes, well, at least you didn’t get a gallon of water rammed up your arse.

PANEL FIVE

The top half of Pinckney’s body leans out of the hole, offering a hand up to Golovin.

GOLOVIN
You should have crossed your ankles.

PINCKNEY
Which I would have done if a certain former Soviet slut someone hadn’t shoved me!

GOLOVIN
My Poor baby.

PAGE 4

PANEL ONE

The Venice Plaza. A crowd is starting to gather around the carnage. Santini points at Jukko and Jaeger. Everyone ignores Hallibastard.

HALLIBASTARD
Hey.

SANTINI
Jaeger, Jukko, you two grab Flint and go. Barak and I will get Frederick.

JUKKO
Yessir.

PANEL TWO

Jaeger and Jukko stagger under the weight of the unconscious Flint, each of them with one of the unconscious woman's arms over their shoulders, one leg under their arm.

JAEGER
Sir? What about the Merovingian and his brother?

HALLIBASTARD
Hey.

SANTINI
We'll take them. I'm not leaving their genetic material lying around for someone to experiment with.

PANEL THREE

Jukko & Jager walk through the teleport circle. The tourists are standing around the StormWatch crew, taking photos of the carnage. Santini & Barak are swinging The Merovingian's dead body between them--one has the arms, the other has the feet--like a jump rope.

HALLIBASTARD
HEY!

PANEL FOUR

Santini & Barak fling the dead Merovingian into the circle.

HALLIBASTARD
FUCKING HEY, ALREADY!

PAGE 5

PANEL ONE

Santini whirls onto The Hallibastard, screaming at him, up in his face. Hallibastard draws back, startled.

SANTINI
(huge balloon)
WHAT?!

PANEL TWO

Hallibastard recovers. He smugly looks down at Santini. In the BG, Barak pushes Juan José's body into the teleport circle.

HALLIBASTARD
I just thought that you'd want to thank me for saving your life.

SANTINI
I KNOW what YOU want. What does SHE want?

HALLIBASTARD
Who?

SANTINI
Ivana Baiul, the bitch that holds your leash. How else would you have known where and when I would be here?

PANEL THREE

Hallibastard smiles and hands Santini a business card. In the background, Barak wraps the unconscious Alias around his arm like a rubber garden hose.

HALLIBASTARD
She wants a meeting. Your place, your time. Call this number.

BARAK
Almost done here, sir.

SANTINI
Good. Hump it through, I'll be right along.

PANEL FOUR

Above the crowd, slight downangle. Squeezing through the crowd are several Italian Carabineri with MP5 machine guns, shouting into walkie-talkies. They're not to Santini and Hallibastard yet, but should be in under 30 seconds.

5 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
Tell her I'll call when I've sorted some shit out. Meanwhile, I need you to handle something for me.

HALLIBASTARD
What?

PANEL FIVE

Small. Santini points upwards.

SANTINI
Them.

HALLIBASTARD
Huh?

PAGE 6

PANEL ONE

Uphot. The Authority streak downwards out of a golden Authority "Door."

HALLIBASTARD

Oh Fuck.

PANEL TWO

Hallibastard looks around for Santini, but Santini is disappearing into a teleport circle.

HALLIBASTARD

Santini?

PANEL THREE

Hallibastard is tackled by a speeding Apollo going Mach 5...

HALLIBASTARD

Fwoooooooooggghhhk!

PANEL FOUR

And slammed into the base of the St. Marks Belltower, which begins to topple over.

HALLIBASTARD

Fkkkaaahhk!

PAGE 7

PANEL ONE

Jaeger drags Santini upwards out of a teleport hole (remember, the water is on the other side at about floor level) and into a cold metal room.

To differentiate Jaeger from other black-haired guys on the team, let's draw him as a bit younger. He's been long-haired from the beginning, which helps (as does the mask, obviously), but let's also cast him as about 22-24 which works better storywise, anyway.

SANTINI
Thanks. Everyone get here okay?

JAEGER
We lost some equipment. The expensive kind.

SANTINI
After my next few conversations, I'm hoping that money's not going to be a problem for us anytime soon. Where is everyone?

PANEL TWO

Dripping wet, Santini grabs a towel off of a stack and dries his arms.

JAEGER
The main room. What is this place, anyway?

SANTINI
Might be our new base of operations. I'm looking to buy it from a guy I know. Did you get The Merovingian and his cousin into the freezers?

JAEGER
Yes sir. May I ask why are we keeping them?

PANEL THREE

Santini opens a door, a row of large coffin-shaped freezers stands along the wall.

SANTINI
To study them. Learn their weaknesses, how to kill them easier.

JAEGER
Is that the only reason?

SANTINI
Do we need another?

7 CONTINUED:

JAEGER
I...

SANTINI
Say it.

PANEL FOUR

Santini looks through the glass door of one of the coffins. Inside is the dead Juan José, his chest pushed open from the inside. The reflection of Jaeger is in the glass as he stands behind the dripping wet Santini.

JAEGER
I am worried about the current makeup of this team. We started as eight humans--ach, nein, seven humans and Jukko. We now have six humans and five superhumans. One a team which was designed to hunt superhumans.

PANEL FIVE

Santini looks at Jaeger who looks down at the floor.

SANTINI
Four carefully screened superhumans, Jaeger. You need to be careful with these feelings. You let something eat away at you like this and you'll stop trusting the team. Then you'll fuck up and someone will end up dead.

JAEGER
Yes sir. It's just...

PANEL SIX

Santini grips the dejected Jaeger's shoulder.

SANTINI
Your parents. I understand. But these are your team members and they're nothing like the people who killed your parents. You understand me, son?

JAEGER
Yessir.

SANTINI
Good. Now let's go get something warm to drink.

PAGE 8

PANEL ONE

Big panel. A huge domed room. The top of the room is an opaque glass. Blue sky can sorta be seen beyond it. It's like a giant igloo if it was designed by an Art Nouveau/Art Deco genius... all of the lamps, tables and couches are curving and fluid. There are two levels, curved stairwells lead upstairs to library shelves full of books all around the room. Doors on the bottom floor lead to other rooms.

A giant fireplace fills one side of the room. The StormWatch team standing around in wet clothes, towelling off while watching a large-screen television set into the wall. Even the TV seems art-deco-ish somehow, even though it's a huge 72-inch flatscreen.

SANTINI
What are you people doing?

BARAK
Watching the show you left behind.

PANEL TWO

Angle including the television. It's the FAUX NEWS Channel. Onscreen Hallibastard has Jack Hawksmoor on the ground, is sitting on his shoulders and pounding his face in like two third graders fighting in a schoolyard. Tefibi and Pinckney are betting on the fight, waving money in their hands.

TEFIBI
Go GIANT GO!

PINCKNEY
He'll fold, he always folds!

BARAK
He's holding his own pretty well...

PANEL THREE

Two giant fists form out of the stones of St. Marks plaza. One cups Hallibastard, the other slams into it, like punching one fist into the other. Everyone winces except Pinckney who's ecstatic, taking money from Tefibi.

BARAK
...then again, maybe not.

SANTINI
Let me know how it turns out. Meanwhile, get this place cleaned up. The landlord's going to be coming over later and I don't want him thinking we're trashing his secret lair.

8 CONTINUED:

BARAK
Yessir.

PANEL FOUR

Small. Barak points towards one of the doorways.

SANTINI
Where did Flint and Patrick end up?

BARAK
Codename Alias... uh, Patrick and Flint are in the Medical Bay with the Doctor.

SANTINI
Thanks.

PAGE 9

PANEL ONE

Santini opens a wooden door with a large red cross on it.

SANTINI
Doctor Grunier?

GRUNIER (O.S.)
In here, Colonel.

PANEL TWO

Santini stands over an elaborate Art Nouveau Medical table. On the table is Flint, still unconscious, a gas mask over her face. Next to her is an ekg readout. Dr. Grunier stands next to the bed. Grunier looks like a red-headed Audrey Hepburn with a tight, short hairstyle.

SANTINI
Is she...

GRUNIER
She's unconscious. Her brain is functioning normally. I imagine she'll wake up in a few hours with an awful headache.

SANTINI
What about Patrick?

PANEL THREE

On another elaborate Art Nouveau table is a glass cube inside is the shapeless boneless mass of Codename Alias. It's like a Ken doll melted into a glass cube.

GRUNIER
He's fine. He woke up a few hours ago, briefly, then fell unconscious again. His physiology is amazing. He'll be fine. Mind you, a human would have been instantly fried.

PANEL FOUR

Santini scratches his chin.

SANTINI
We got caught with our pants down. The job was accomplished, but having either of these two killed wouldn't have been worth it.

SANTINI
The Merovingian and his mother's brother's hairdresser's cousin are in the deep freeze, by the way.

9 CONTINUED:

GRUNIER
Good. I’m looking forward to dissecting them and seeing if I can find out the physics behind what those powers were.

PANEL FIVE

Santini smirks.

SANTINI
What? Don’t you believe in the power of the Holy Ghost?

GRUNIER
I believe in what I can cut open.

PANEL SIX

Santini bends down and kisses Flint’s sleeping forehead.

SANTINI
Let me know what you find. If Flint wakes up, tell her I went to see a man about a dog.

PAGE 10

PANEL ONE

Santini strolling through the domed room. It’s really lavish, velvet curtains, leather furniture, gold gilded statues, etc.

Only Tefibi, Barak and Tefibi are still in the main room. A teleport circle is open in the middle of the room.

SANTINI
Just the men I wanted to see. Tefibi, is our guest here yet?

TEFIBI
Any second now.

PANEL TWO

An old man steps out of the teleport circle. He’s about 90, bent over, but sharp-eyed. He’s wearing a parka and is lightly covered with snow. He carries a cool-looking silver cane with electronic doo-dads all over it.

COLM HARDY
Damn, that was just ‘bout too durned cold for these old bones.

SANTINI
Welcome back to MAGNETIC NORTH, Mr. Hardy.

PANEL THREE

The old man eyes Santini up and down, a suspicious look on his face.

COLM HARDY
You’d be Colonel Santini, I expect. Just saw you on the televideo killing some jumped-up nancy boys in Italy. Hard to believe that your fancy glow-box could get you here in time to meet with me, but there you are. Science Marches On.

PANEL FOUR

C/U on Tefibi. His eyes bulge, his jaw slack open.

TEFIBI
You... You’re... YOU’RE COLM HARDY!?

PANEL FIVE

Hardy stares at Tefibi like he’s a brain-damaged dog.

10 CONTINUED:

COLM HARDY
Yes, that’s right, kid. Who are you?

PAGE 11

PANEL ONE

Tefibi eagerly shakes Hardy's hand. He has a look on his face like someone just gave him a billion dollars. The old man is slightly repulsed.

TEFIBI
(squeeze these words together to insinuate he's talking REALLY fast)
Khalid Tefibi, I'm the technical and computer support specialist for Team Achilles, sir, it's amazing to meet you, Oh My God, I'm shaking hands with Colm Hardy, I'm about to pass out...

PANEL TWO

Santini sticks his arm between them and shoves the starstruck Tefibi back. Barak looks confused.

SANTINI
Give the man his arm back, Tefibi.

BARAK
I'm sorry, but I didn't hear you clearly, sir--

PANEL THREE

Short and wide. C/U on Barak's eyes. They glint slightly, an indication that he's using his power.

BARAK
Who is Colm Hardy?

PANEL FOUR

Barak's face, eyes open wide, mouth agape as images rush into his head.

BARAK
Oh my God, you...

PAGE 12

PANEL ONE

Huge panel. In the center of the panel is **THE MAGNATEER**, the Wildstorm Universe version of Commando Cody. Only instead of a jetpack, he has two flat round discs strapped to his feet with blurry “magnetic waves” pushing him forwards through the sky.

Around the main shot of The Magnateer flying through the sky are posed-out action shots of him doing various cool things. The idea here is that Barak is being innundated with exciting visuals from The Magnateer’s life.

In one shot he’s in this pose:

http://www.filmfax.com/archives/commando_cody/images/cody3.jpg

Holding a giant MAGNET GUN which is emitting magno-waves and tearing a schwastika-wearing Blonde Nazi Uberman apart.

In another, he’s flying around a Giant Kirby Monster (complete with little modesty-monster-penis-covering bathing suit) which is rising from the Ocean Depths and shoving humans into its snaggled-toothed mouth. The Magnateer is shooting him in the eyes. Half-chewed humans fall out everywhere.

In the bottom right, just to show that superheroin’s not JUST about killing Nazis and flying around like a ninny, The Magneteer’s got his pointy helmet tilted back on his head and he’s kissing a woman in a tarzan-esque loincloth who sure looks a lot like Bettie Page. He’s also feeling her up under her loincloth.

BARAK (CAPTION)
(huge)
YOU WERE THE MAGNATEER!

PANEL TWO

Small panel. The old man looks at Barak and Tefibi like they’re a couple of retards.

COLM HARDY
Of course. Why else did you think you were sitting in the middle of my old secret headquarters?

TEFIBI
OHMYGODTHISISYOUROLDSECRETHEADQUARTERS?

COLM HARDY
And stay out of my brain you little snoop. You do that again and I’ll fry your brain like I did to that Nazi shitheel Dr. Mindtwister.

PAGE 13

PANEL ONE

Jaeger looks confused. Hardy points his cane at him, angry.

JAEGER
Weren't you one of the first superheroes back in the 1930's?

COLM HARDY
SCIENCE HEROES! There's BIG difference! I never did nothin' that no one without a few phD's couldn't have done. I didn't pop outta no space ship being able to fly, I EARNED my thrills, kid.

PANEL TWO

Colm smiles at Santini.

COLM HARDY
Your boys here are as sharp as a batch of bowling balls, Colonel. Let's hope they know how to transfer money.

SANTINI
That's one thing they excel at. Tefibi, get your laptop.

PANEL THREE

Tefbi pulls his tiny alien laptop out of a pouch on his back.

TEFIBI
Ready.

SANTINI
Good. Barak? Give me the Swiss Bank Account numbers of The Merovingian and his friends.

BARAK
Hold on, I'll shift them from Jaeger to Tefibi.

PANEL FOUR

Jaeger touches his head, a weird look on his face. Tefibi squints.

TEFIBI
Okay, I got the numbers and the codephrases.

SANTINI
Start transferring the funds. Move 'em around a bit, I don't want this coming back to us.

13 CONTINUED:

TEFIBI
Easy like Sunday Morning.

PANEL FIVE

Santini turns to Hardy. Hardy is shocked.

SANTINI
Now, sir, how much did you want for this old place? One and a half?

COLM HARDY
OLD PLACE? This “OLD PLACE” has a state-of-the-art physics labratory, a medical center, untraceable internet trunkline access, an armory, vehicle storage--I can’t-- You Rotten Little--You first contacted me, I said SEVEN! One and a Half is a RIPOFF!

SANTINI
Mr. Hardy, surely you know the cardinal rule of Real Estate... Location, Location, Location-

PAGE 14

PANEL ONE

Exterior, the North Pole. Buried amongst huge piles of snow, rock and ice is The Magnateer's secret North Pole hideout. It's designed to fit into the landscape, but you can just barely see it. It should look like part of the mountain but with windows set into the side.

CAPTION
Magnetic North Pole, The Arctic.

SANTINI (CAPTION)
-and the location up here is a little lacking.

PANEL TWO

Back inside. Hardy sneers at Santini.

COLM HARDY
What's the matter, son? Nowhere to run out to for pizza? Besides, what do YOU care? You got your little go-tube. You can pop up anywhere you want.

PANEL THREE

Colm gets a crafty look on his face.

COLM HARDY
Hey... now THAT'S an idea. Tell you what... TWO and a half and you give me the specs to your little teleporter--

SANTINI
(interrupting)
No can do. I've kept that technology out of public--

COLM HARDY
(interrupting)
MY use only, and when I die, the technology and any improvements I make to it revert back to you.

PANEL FOUR

Hardy looks contemplative. He looks to the skies, contemplative.

COLM HARDY
I'm bored of this world, Colonel. All of the fun went out of it back in the seventies. You got a machine there which can open up a whole new universe for me.

14 CONTINUED:

COLM HARDY
You give me that and two and a half, and I'll call it even. Plus you get all the improvements I make to it.

PANEL FIVE

Santini strokes his chin.

SANTINI
It's a deal on one condition... you remain open to Tefibi as a consultant.

COLM HARDY
If the kid thinks he can hang with the old man, not a problem. He gives me any lip, though, and I'm gonna butter his tie.

PANEL SIX

Santini & Hardy shaking hands.

SANTINI
It's a deal. Tefibi, transfer two and a half Billion dollars into Mr. Hardy's accounts and give him the technical diagrams for Project Entry. Jaeger, change into civilian clothes and come with me...

PAGE 15

PANEL ONE

Exterior. The Vatican, outside the vatican wall.

http://www.lanacos.com/images/italy/street.JPG

Santini and Jaeger emerge from a teleport circle in an alley. In the BG, the top of the Vatican Dome can be seen above a bunch of buildings. They're wearing well-tailored civilians clothes. Turtlenecks, slacks, leather coats, big sunglasses & hats, that sort of thing.

CAPTION
Rome, Italy

SANTINI (CAPTION)
We've got another meeting to go to.

PANEL TWO

Santini & Jaeger step up to the back door of the Vatican (see reference section).

SANTINI
Once we're inside, don't say anything. You're here for backup only, understand?

JAEGER
Yes.

PANEL THREE

They stop in front of two Swiss Guards (see the reference section) next to a huge marble doorway with an elaborate iron gate.

SANTINI
Benito Santini and Jaeger Weiss to see Cardinal Torquemada.

SWISS GUARD
Of course, signore. If you would first empty your pockets of any metal items?

SANTINI
Surely.

PANEL FOUR

Santini takes his stormwatch communications fetish from around his neck (see issue #1 & 2 for good shots of it... it's like a thin palm pilot you wear around your neck) and puts it into a bin. Jaeger starts pulling pistols and knives out of his pockets, pant legs, etc. and stacking them on a table.

15 CONTINUED:

SWISS GUARD
Arms up and legs wide, please, signore.

SANTINI
Of course.

PANEL FIVE

The two men search Weiss & Santini, who have their arms raised and legs apart. One guy searches around Santini’s belt and the other is pulling a thin bendable blade from Jaeger’s shoe. Another pile of guns and knives is on the ground next to him.

SWISS GUARD
Cardinal Torquemada will meet you by the spire, signore.

SANTINI
Thank you.

PAGE 16

PANEL ONE

The big famous view of the Vatican everyone's familiar with, the Piazza of St. Peter's. Santini & Jaeger step towards the large spire, St. Peter's Basillica in the background.

NO DIALOG

PANEL TWO

At the base of the column is CARDINAL TORQUEMADA, the Catholic Superhero. He's just a guy in the black cardinal robes, but the cut of his robes is definitely NOT typical... the chest is tight, for instance, he's almost 7 feet tall, his shoulders are huge... muscles ripple under his robes, his jaw is square, his eyes narrow and suspicious. He's impressive.

http://www.catholic.org.tw/taoyuanchurch/50year/cardinal3.jpg

TORQUEMADA
(do something elaborate with his font, don't use the same font as everyone else)
Benito Santini. How good to see you again. It pleases me greatly that the THE AUTHORITY has not lain their iconoclastic hands upon you.

PANEL THREE

Torquemada holds his hand out for Santini to kiss his ring. Santini does. Jaeger is weirded out.

SANTINI
Cardinal Torquemada.

TORQUEMADA
It was difficult to miss the visual proof of your success in your mission. CNN played it 48 times before wiser minds prevailed and pulled the more grisly footage.

PANEL FOUR

Santini straightens up and pulls two vials of blood and two bags of hair clippings out of his coat pocket.

SANTINI
Then I imagine the Vatican Bank will be quick in their payment? I brought the blood and hair clippings as I promised.

TORQUEMADA
Is there no way I could persuade you to give me the corpses of the base pretenders? Perhaps a bonus upon the price?

16 CONTINUED:

SANTINI
Not going to happen, Cardinal. I don’t want
the Vatican growing any more like YOU.

PAGE 17

PANEL ONE

Torquemada smiles, revealing sharp tiger-like teeth.

TORQUEMADA
Why, Colonel Santini, I didn't think you knew.

SANTINI
I kill Superhumans for a living, Cardinal. After a while you develop a sense for it. A form of superhero Gaydar, if you will.

PANEL TWO

Torquemada slips the hair and blood into a hidden pocket in his robes.

TORQUEMADA
Superhero Gaydar. I like that, colonel. Sixty Six Billion Euros will be deposited to your accounts by midnight. One Billion for every year that each of those bastards spent on Earth.

SANTINI
Always a pleasure doing business with The Holy See, Cardinal. May I ask why YOU were never tasked to dispose of The Merovingian and his cousin-not-cousin?

PANEL THREE

Torquemada makes a fist and an angry face.

TORQUEMADA
MANY were the times I requested the assignment...and each of my pleas was DENIED. Now that I see the public relations disaster YOUR mission became, I see the WISDOM of it.

PANEL FOUR

He smiles again. CREEPY!

TORQUEMADA
After all, who would feel comfortable with a POPE who had been seen 48 times on CNN KILLING two pretenders to the throne of St. Peter?

SANTINI
You're that sure of your ascendancy?

17 CONTINUED:

TORQUEMADA
Oh, must assured. Now, I must return to my duties. It has been a true pleasure seeing you. Be safe.

PANEL FIVE

He holds out his massive hand again for Santini to kiss.

SANTINI
Until next time, your excellency.

PAGE 18

PANEL ONE

Torquemada streaks offscreen so fast he leaves only a smear of color. Santini and Jaeger's hair & clothes are pulled after him by the vacuum of his leaving. Jaeger looks sick to his stomach.

SANTINI
Christ, I hate it when they do that.

SANTINI
He... HE is to be the next POPE?

SANTINI
HE evidently THINKS so. Would YOU vote against him? I wonder how MUCH he would have paid to learn the names of The Merovingian's spies inside the Vatican?

JAEGER
Today I Thank God I am a Lutheran.

IVANA BAIUL (O.S.)
You always excelled at playing both ends against the middle, Santini.

PANEL TWO

Santini & Jaeger turn around. Standing there are Ivana Baiul & a bruised and black-eyed Hallibastard wearing his tough-guy nascar corporate sponsors logo outfit with a huge red H on the front.

IVANA BAIUL
But then, you learned from the best. ME.

SANTINI
Ivana Baiul. I'm fascinated to see that you survived THE AUTHORITY'S White House PURGE. I thought they would have greased you right after they took out President Terns.

PANEL THREE

Ivana looks angry. She counts off on her fingers.

IVANA BAIUL
No, by the time they came for him, I was gone. Unfortunately, they foiled my exit plan.

SANTINI
I didn't hear about this... fill me in.

18 CONTINUED:

IVANA BAIUL
President, Vice President, Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, Secretary of State...

IVANA BAIUL
And then ME, Secretary of Homeland Defense.

PANEL FOUR

Santini laughs, Ivana steams.

SANTINI
And YOU had a plan to pop the other FOUR men who were in line in front of you?

IVANA BAIUL
And it would have worked too, if it wasn't for those damned AUTHORITY superidiots! I could have been the first FEMALE President of the United States!

SANTINI
You're too much, Ivana.

PANEL FIVE

Inset. Smile on his lips. Hate in his eyes.

SANTINI
Now, what the FUCK do you want?

PAGE 19

PANEL ONE

Ivana points to Hallibastard. Santini points to Hallibastard. Hallibastard points at Santini.

IVANA BAIUL
My new employers, Hallibusker Construction, have a problem for you to look into. You'd be taking Hallibastard along. Her performance against The Authority proved he needs more training

SANTINI
Hallibusker doesn't have enough money in its treasury to make me take this idiot clown under my wing!

HALLIBASTARD
Idiot Clown? You better watch out I don't squash you like a bug, Santini!

PANEL TWO

Small inset panel. C/U of Torquemada's hand on Hallibastard's outstretched arm.

SOUND E/FX
Fwappp

PANEL THREE

Torquemada has Hallibastard's arm behind his back and his forearm across his throat. Santini shakes his head. Jaeger smiles broadly. Ivana puts her hand over her eyes, disgusted.

IVANA BAIUL
(tiny font)
Fucking incompetent...

TORQUEMADA
I know you were not contemplating violence in The Holy City.

HALLIBASTARD
(small font as he chokes)
Who...ME?

SANTINI
Cardinal. I apologize for the boy... he didn't know about you or your policy.

TORQUEMADA
And that is why I allow him to live.

19 CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Torquemada shifts, a blur of color, hurling Hallibastard out of the scene.

TORQUEMADA
Hrrrmmnnn!

PANEL FIVE

Torquemada smiles at Santini and Baiul as the tiny dot of Hallibastard disappears into the distance.

HALLIBASTARD
(tiny font)
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

TORQUEMADA
Another two Billion for the names of The Merovingian's Vatican collaborators.

SANTINI
Done. You'll receive an email when I get the confirmation from my Geneva bank.

TORQUEMADA
Excellent.

PANEL SIX

Torquemada disappears again. Everyone's hair & clothes flutter.

IVANA BAIUL
I hate it when they do that.

SANTINI
Talk fast or I'm leaving. As you see, I'm no longer hurting for money. What's in this for me and my team?

IVANA BAIUL
How about FREEDOM for millions of people?

PAGE 20

PANEL ONE

Back at Magnetic North Base, in the Big Room. Santini stands in front of the huge TV. Watching him, completely armed for bear are Flint, Jaeger, Singh, Alias, Barak and Hallibastard.

On the TV is a map of Africa. A blow-up shows The Democratic Republic of Congo.

SANTINI
This is the Democratic Republic of Congo, it's a former Belgian colony that used to be known as Zaire. It's been in the middle of a CIVIL WAR since 1997, with Uganda and Rwanda supporting various rebel movements in an effort to steal Congo's Columbite-Tatalite ore--COLTAN.

SANTINI
Refined Coltan is a heat-resistant powder that holds a high electrical charge, making it a vital element in almost all cell phones, laptops, pagers and many other electronics. It can go for Five Hundred Dollars per pound. This mineral has fed the war which has killed TENS OF THOUSANDS of people.

PANEL TWO

Santini holds up his SW fetish.

SANTINI
There's Coltan in each of your StormWatch fetishes, in Project Entry's controls and in the monitor we're looking at. We're just as big a part of this problem as the rest of the world, people.

PANEL THREE

C/U on Santini.

SANTINI
A tentative cease fire was brokered a few months back and large mining corporations like Hallibusker Construction have flooded in to exploit the resource. Strangely enough, for perhaps the first time ever, Hallibusker's the good guy here--they're providing jobs and tax money for the new shakey democratic government.

20 CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Overhead satellite shot. Mining equipment sits unused, everything looks normal, but still, quiet.

SANTINI
Two weeks ago, the Hallibusker Mining Base went silent. Satellite imagery shows no damage to the facility, no explosion craters, no sign of tank tracks or anything similar. Also, there is NO TRACE of the 2 million people who live in the region.

SANTINI
Mercenary Teams sent in by Hallibusker disappeared without a trace.

PANEL FIVE

Santini, grim.

SANTINI
Earlier this evening, I sent in an advance team made up of Buzz Dixon, Jukko, Golovin and Pinckney. They've disappeared. These are our stealthiest operators... if they've been compromised, we're in trouble.

SANTINI
We're going in and we're going hard. And if anything's happened to our teammates, we're going to level that fucking place and kill everyone involved. Everyone ready?

TEFIBI (O.S.)
I am...

PAGE 21

PANEL ONE

On Santini, face in his hands.

SANTINI
Ohmigod. Where The Fuck did you get that?

PANEL TWO

Tefibi stands in the doorway, wedged into The Magnateer's old costume, the giant Magnet-gun slung over his shoulder. Everybody bites their fists and tongues and insides of their cheeks trying to keep from laughing.

TEFIBI
What? WHAT?!?

SANTINI
Nothing. Absolutely nothing. This is a Big Guns only mission... no computers, nothing technical. You sure you want to come along on this?

TEFIBI
Fuck, Yeah! I feel like King Fucking Kong inside this thing! It's damn near impenetrable!

SANTINI
Your call. Barak, you stand monitor duty in Tefibi's place.

PANEL THREE

C/Up on Barak, desperately trying not to laugh, eyes watering.

BARAK
Yes...Sir. Hrrmphhhh!

PANEL FOUR

Tefibi glowers at everyone as they line up to charge through pulsing teleport holes.

SANTINI
Okay, people, Hit the ground running. Or MAGNETING, as the case may be.

TEFIBI
Har de fucking har har.

PANEL FIVE

Everyone rushes through the teleport circles.

21 CONTINUED:

SANTINI

GO!

PAGE 22

PANEL ONE

Huge Panel. Inside the blood red Project Entry Universe. Africa. Spread out in front of them is a huge savannah grassland leading down to a river. TONS of living human beings are in the water, skimming the river rock for Coltan (think of it as panning for gold), other are pushing huge blocks towards a giant Golden Pyramid which is half-built in the distance. In the midground is a huge pile of burnt dead bodies.

CAPTION
Democratic Republic of Congo. Project Entry Universe.

SANTINI
What the Holy Fuck?

TEFIBI
I thought everyone here was DEAD?!

JUKKO (O.S.)
Not everyone...

PANEL TWO

Everyone turns around. Jukko stands up out of some tall grass behind them, bloodied and bruised.

SANTINI
Jukko! What happened here?

JUKKO
Been here so long... two weeks, no assistance, no help, no supplies... no word from you...

PANEL THREE

C/U on a very haunted-looking Jukko.

JUKKO
And they keep coming back to life! No matter how many times I kill them, they come back! Just like their leader...

PANEL FOUR

C/U on Santini.

JUKKO (O.S.)
BARON CHAOS!

CAPTION
To be continued.

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THE TEAM - HUMAN
Santini
Tefibi
Jaeger
Pinckney
Golovin
Dr. Grunier
Ajit Singh

THE TEAM - SUPERHUMAN
Buzz Dixon
Flint
Jukko
Alias
Barak
Hallibastard